

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF IOWA,

And a Memorial to the

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

FOR A GRANT OF LAND FOR THE

Council Bluffs and Davenport Rail Road.



IOWA CITY:
PRINTED AT THE REPORTER OFFICE.
.....
1849.



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ADDRESS AND MEMORIAL.

At an adjourned meeting of the committee appointed by the citizens of Johnson county to prepare an address, &c., upon the subject of a railroad from Davenport to Council Bluffs, Gov. Lucas, from the sub-committee appointed for that purpose reported the following address:

To the People of the State of Iowa.

The committee appointed by the railroad convention assembled at Iowa City, on the 27th day of October, 1843, to prepare on behalf of said convention, an address and memorial on the subject of a railroad through the interior of Iowa, from the Council Bluffs, on the Missouri river by Ft. Des Moines and Iowa City to Davenport, on the Mississippi river, would in the first place call the public attention to the proceedings of the National Railroad Convention assembled at St. Louis, in Missouri, on the 15th of October last, as well as the proceedings of the Convention assembled at Memphis, in Tennessee, on the 23d of said month. The convention at St. Louis, declared by their resolutions that, "that convention in its spirit and object were strictly national, having no party, no sectional, no local interest to serve or promote, but having at heart the interest of the whole country," that it was the duty of the General Government to provide at an early period for the construction of a Central National Railroad from the Valley of the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean, and that a grand trunk railroad with branches to St. Louis, Memphis and Chicago, would be such a central and national railroad. The convention at Memphis adopted several resolutions reported by a committee appointed for the purpose, declaring it as the

opinion of that convention, that it was the duty of the general government to provide at an early period for the construction of a National railroad from the Mississippi river to the Pacific Ocean.

That to facilitate the advancement of that object, it was the duty of the General Government to constitute an efficient and competent corps of engineers to make complete explorations and surveys of all the routes that have been designated by public opinion as proper for the line of the road. That after the proper surveys shall have been completed, that it was the duty of the General Government to locate the line of said road upon the route which is the easiest of access, best calculated to subserve the purposes of National defence, convenient to the people of, and as far as practicable central to the United States.

That to carry into effect the object of the first resolution that the public lands constitute a legitimate and proper fund, that after the construction of a national rail road trunk from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean, that it was the duty of the Congress to aid by the appropriation of the national domain in the construction of such branch railroads as will best connect it with the northern Lakes and the great thoroughfares, leading to the Atlantic Ocean, and such other points on the Mississippi as will best connect it with the line in contemplation or in course of construction, and that it was the duty of the Federal Government to provide under liberal conditions for a connection between the main trunk of the national railroad and all railroads now made or which may hereafter be constructed by the authority of the several States and Territories of the Union.

We would also call the attention of the citizens of Iowa, to the opinions expressed in resolutions adopted by the Legislature of Illinois at their recent session. That body declared that they approved of the general proposition of constructing a national railroad, commencing at some point on the eastern line of the Territory lying between the States and the Pacific Ocean, on such route as shall after due and proper explorations be found most practicable. That the eastern terminus of said road, should be fixed at such points as should be found most easy of approach to and with the channel of the eastern and western railroads running through the States to the Atlantic now in progress of construction, and without special regard to the local interest of any town or city. That a point as far north as Council Bluffs, or between that and the mouth of the Kansas river, for the eastern terminus of said national railroad, is the most eligible point for a union of said road with the before mentioned roads leading eastwardly through the States to the great commercial marts on the Atlantic, thereby subserving the best interests of the cities on the Lakes, the interests of the interior of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri, and the country south of Ohio river, and instructed their Senators and requested their Representatives to conform their action on the subject referred to in said resolutions in accordance with the principles therein expressed.

In calling the attention of the citizens of Iowa to the proceedings of the Saint Louis and Memphis Conventions, as well as those of the Legislature of Illinois, we are sensibly impressed with the unanimity of sentiment as expressed by both of said conventions as well as the Legislature of Illinois, in favor of a great central national railroad, extending from the Mississippi river to the Pacific Ocean, with branches to accommodate the various interests of the nation. As far as we have been enabled to judge from the facts that have come under our notice this subject is rapidly concentrating public opinion in favor of a speedy accomplishment of the work, and when this opinion is brought to bear in full power upon the government, the mandate of the

people must be obeyed. Public opinion, as far as it has been expressed unites in recommending to the General Government the establishment of a great central national railroad from the Pacific Ocean to the western borders of the States, agrees that the same should be located as best calculated to accommodate the general interest of the nation, with branches on the west, one to San Francisco, in California; and the other to the mouth of Columbia river, or Fugent's Sound, in Oregon, and on the east, one branch southward to Memphis, one central, to St. Louis, and one northward to Lake Michigan, at Chicago. In viewing the subject at this time we, will call the attention of the people of Iowa in an especial manner to the northern branch, so far as it may run through the State of Iowa, and believing that the most direct route, and the one that is best calculated to accommodate the greatest public interest, will be ultimately adopted, we briefly invite their attention to the route from the Council Bluffs, on the Missouri river, by Ft. Des Moines, and Iowa City, to Davenport on the Mississippi river, at Rock Island.

The first General Assembly of Iowa, at their extra session passed a resolution dated the 24th day of January, 1848, instructing our Senators, and requesting our Representatives to procure from the government of the United States a grant of land to aid in the construction of a railroad from Davenport, by way of Iowa City, Racoon Forks to some point near the Council Bluffs, on the Missouri river, and a bill was reported in the House of Representatives of the United States, making the grant prayed for, but failed on its passage. The present General Assembly at their regular session took up the subject and passed a resolution, dated the 29th December, 1848, giving similar instructions to our Senators and Representatives. Thus it will be perceived, that both General Assemblies, elected under the Constitution of the State, by their official acts approved this route. The Council Bluffs, on the Missouri, and Rock Island, at Davenport, on the Mississippi, are generally admitted to be the most suitable and convenient points for crossing these

rivera with a railroad, and being on the most direct route for the northern branch of the great central national railroad in its progress to the east, which from necessity must pass south of the southern end of Lake Michigan, the Maumee and Sandusky Bays, and down the southern shore of Lake Erie, to connect with the Buffalo railroad, extending by Albany to Boston.

By reference to the most approved maps, it will be found that the Council Bluffs, and Davenport, at Rock Island, are about the same parallel of latitudes, and that Fort Des Moines and Iowa City are situated within a few miles of a direct line between these two points, and that in extending the route eastward, the south bend of Lake Michigan, the Maumee and Sandusky Bays will be within a few minutes of the same parallel of latitude.

The road from Davenport to Council Bluffs cannot exceed three hundred and twenty-five miles, thence, (according to Mr. Loughborough's estimate) to the South Pass, eight hundred miles, making the distance from the Mississippi to the South Pass eleven hundred and twenty-five miles. From St. Louis to the mouth of the Kansas river 275 miles, thence to the South Pass 900 miles, making, from St. Louis to the South Pass 1175 miles—fifty miles greater than the distance from Davenport to the South Pass; thus it will be perceived, that Rock Island, by the way of Council Bluffs, is the nearest point at which the Mississippi river can be reached, and on the most direct route to Chicago, and the south bend of Lake Michigan. The road, in its progress eastward, from the Council Bluffs, will intersect the Des Moines improvement at Fort Des Moines; will cross the Iowa river, and intersect the Duquaque and Keokuk railroad at Iowa City, and on its approach to Davenport, it will connect with the railroad now being made from Rock Island to Peru, in Illinois, at the junction of the Chicago canal with the Illinois river. In its progress eastward to Chicago, it will intersect the Chicago and Galena railroad, and the railroad in contemplation from Chicago to Cairo, and in its passage around the south bend of Lake Michigan, it will pass through Michigan City in Indiana and

at N. Buffalo; it will intersect the Detroit railroad in Michigan; thence at Toledo on the Maumee Bay, it will intersect the main trunk of the Wabash and Erie canal, which unites with the Maumee canal extending to Cincinnati; thence passing round the Sandusky Bay at Sandusky City, it will intersect the Sandusky and Mad river railroad extending through Xenia to Cincinnati, as well as the Sandusky City and Mansfield railroad which connects with the Central railroad running by Pittsburgh, Hollidaysburg and Harrisburg, to Philadelphia, in Pennsylvania; thence at Cleveland it will intersect the main Ohio canal, uniting the Michigan and Scioto Valley, and by the Muskingum improvements affording a free navigation from the Lake to the Ohio river at Portsmouth and Marietta; with a branch extending along the Mahoning river to Pittsburgh; it will also intersect at this place the Cleveland and Columbus railroads, upon which a connection will be had with a rail road running from Columbus by Newark and Zanesville to Wheeling intersecting the Baltimore and Ohio railroad; thence as it passes down the lake shore, it will run through Erie in Pennsylvania, and at Dunkirk will intersect the New York rail road extending to the City of New York; and at Buffalo it will intersect the Grand New York canal, as well as the great Eastern railroad running by Rochester and Albany in New York, to Boston in Massachusetts. From Buffalo there may be an easy communication across the lakes to the Welland canal round the falls of Niagara on the Canada shore, as well as with various improvements on lake Ontario and the River St. Lawrence.

With these views of the subject, we are clearly of the opinion that the line from Council Bluffs to Davenport presents greater advantages than any other route, and confidently believe that it will eventually be adopted as a portion of the great Atlantic and Pacific railroad, and with these impressions, we recommend to the citizens of Iowa to solicit of the general government an appropriation of land, sufficient to enable the State to accomplish the work.—We have been thus particular in presenting facts con-

nected with the railroad, with the view of attracting the attention of our eastern friends.

In reading the proceedings of a public meeting of the friends of a railroad to California, held at the United States, Hotel in Boston, April 19, 1849, we perceive, that our northern friends were unacquainted with the localities on the Upper Mississippi, although they manifested much zeal in favor of accomplishing a communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by a railroad, and presenting to the public many valuable statistics and forcible arguments in favor of its speedy construction; in all of these proceedings, they appeared to consider St. Louis as the only terminus on the Mississippi.— Without any desire to interfere with the claims of St. Louis to the location of the central branch of the great Pacific railroad, we have considered it due to the citizens of Iowa, and our eastern friends in general, to present the foregoing facts to their calm and dispassionate consideration, most heartily concurring with the St. Louis Convention, in declaring the subject to be of too much importance in a national point of view, to be influenced by individual, local, sectional or party views, but consider it one in which every citizen of the United States, should feel a deep interest, and call upon our fellow citizens, one and all, to unite their energies in concentrating and strengthening public opinion in favor of the speedy accomplishment of the work, and enforcing upon the consideration of Congress the weight of that opinion.

ROBERT LUCAS, Ch'm.

December 1, 1849.

Which on motion of Mr. Byington, was adopted. Mr. Byington from the same sub-committee reported the following Memorial to the Congress of the United States:

To the Congress of the U. States.

A convention of the citizens of central Iowa, which recently assembled at Iowa City, resolved to memorialize the Congress of the United States for a

liberal grant of the public lands, in alternate sections situated in said State, in aid of the construction of a railway from Davenport on the Mississippi river, to the Missouri river, at or near Council Bluffs; and charged a committee, raised for the purpose, with the duty of drafting a memorial expressive of the views and wishes of the convention, and of the people of the State at large.

It is therefore urged upon the attention of your honorable body, that an immediate railway connexion of the two mighty rivers of the north west, at the points above indicated, is not only indispensable to the ultimate development of the vast natural resources of the State of Iowa, but is an urgent necessity to the people who inhabit its interior. The unexampled rapidity of the interior settlements; the unparalleled redundancy of all the productions of agricultural labor, resulting from easily tilled and extremely fertile lands, and the untiring energy of the citizens who have made and are continuing to make their homes upon the inland plains of Iowa, all render the speedy construction of such a work, a matter of the first importance to their social and commercial wants.

Necessary and important as this road undeniably would be, considered as an isolated work, to the agricultural, mineral, manufacturing and commercial interests of the interior of our State, its importance is magnified, and the necessity of its construction becomes imperative, when viewed in connexion with works of a like character, which are verging to completion east, and about to be commenced on the west of us, on a line with the route of the road in question. A railway connection of the Atlantic via the great Lakes at Chicago, and the mighty Mississippi, at two or three points on our eastern border, is about to be consummated, whereby that portion of our citizens who have easy access to the river will have a choice of markets for the surplus productions of their fruitful industry; while the commerce of the Oriental Indies and of all the appendages of the Pacific, is about to be invited to our western boundary, through the almost miraculous agency of the steam locomotive. Thus

trusting with reference to existing and prospective facilities of communication beyond the limits of our State, we regard the construction of the great work in behalf of which we speak, as being indispensable to our prosperity, and essential to the maintenance of that rank among the sisterhood of States to which, with properly developed resources, we are entitled.

In a work of the character and commanding importance of the road in question, it would be inconsistent with the proverbial energy of our people, to hesitate at any combination of natural obstacles to be overcome in its prosecution; yet, inasmuch as we are invoking aid from those who can hardly possess a knowledge of the facts, we can state that the route of the proposed road is pre-eminently favorable, and that its cost, per mile, under suitable management, could hardly exceed three-fourths the minimum cost of similar roads in the United States.

Keenly sensible, as we are, however, of the immense advantages which would flow from the construction of this road, we are constrained to admit to your honorable body, that the period of its completion will be remote, unless the limited means of Iowa, are seconded by the reasonable aid, which, through the public domain within her borders, we ask of the National Congress. Obvious causes render the building of this road a work beyond the immediate available means of the State, or of her citi-

zens. As a commonwealth, we are in our infancy, without revenues adequate to the work, and adverse to debt; and there is not that redundancy of capital among our people, that exists in the older portions of the Republic, where works of this character are easily accomplished by individual and corporate means. On no part of the habitable globe, however, is human industry producing, relatively, more, or population augmenting in a greater ratio than here; and to this unheard of acceleration of population and production, is to be ascribed the fact that a work of this character is really necessary to a people who have not available means to construct it.

We therefore ask your honorable body to make to the State of Iowa, at your present session, after the manner of grants which have been made to other states, a liberal grant of the public lands within her borders, for the specific object of aiding in the construction of the above mentioned railway.

Dec- 1, 1849.

Which, on motion, was adopted.

Ordered, That these proceedings be published in the newspapers of this city, and that the several papers in Iowa be requested to publish the same.

Ordered, That the chairman be instructed to forward to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress, copies of the proceedings of this committee. Adjourned.

ROBT. LUCAS, Ch'm.

JOSIAH H. BONNEY, Sec.